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Reciprocal Teaching as a Reading-Comprehension Strategy Among First-Year Industrial Technology Teacher-Education Majors

At the University of Technology, Jamaica

Everton Ray Lewis

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In Curriculum and Instruction

Mark E. Sanders, Co-chair
Mary Alice Barksdale, Co-chair
Thomas M. Sherman
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Reciprocal Teaching as a Reading-Comprehension Strategy Among First-Year Industrial Technology Teacher-Education Majors
At the University of Technology, Jamaica
Everton Ray Lewis

ABSTRACT
There is a perception among faculty at the University of Technology, Jamaica (UTech) that Industrial Technology students in the Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies (FELS-IT) have difficulty learning non-technical content due to their weak reading-comprehension skills. Reciprocal Teaching strategies have been shown to improve students' reading-comprehension and learning, especially across the United States and Europe (Palincsar and Brown, 1984; Rosenshine and Meister, 1993, 1994). By means of a researcher-developed Cloze-type assessment instrument, this study investigated reciprocal teaching (Palincsar and Brown, 1984) as a possible means of addressing this perceived problem in Jamaica.

A total of 133 participants were involved in the study. Specifically, the study explored empirically the existence of a reading-comprehension problem among the first-year Industrial Technology teacher-education majors at UTech, and the self-perceptions of the participants with respect to their reading-comprehension skills. The study primarily investigated the effect of the reciprocal teaching strategy on improving reading-comprehension scores at the tertiary level, and its perceived efficacy by the participants. An evaluation of the evidence-based findings was used to determine whether to recommend implementing reciprocal teaching into the UTech teaching methodologies, with the overarching aim of improving student achievement.

The findings of this quasi-experimental study suggest that the FELS-IT first-year teacher-education majors are not significantly different from other first-year students enrolled at UTech. Also, the reciprocal teaching intervention significantly improved the group-mean and individual post-test scores of the Treatment group over those of the Control group, and was favorably perceived. The investigation recommends that reciprocal teaching should be implemented across all faculties at UTech, preferably among the first-year students.
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